

**MINUTES**  
**ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION**  
**October 20, 2011**

PRESIDING – Ken Real, Chairman

SECRETARY – Linda Casey, State Forester

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT – Ken Real, Johnny McReynolds, Don Heath, Melisa Love, Randy Gilmore and Irvin Eatman.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION PERSONNEL PRESENT – Linda Casey, Patrick Glass, Tom Conway, Dan Jackson, Neil Letson, Hank McKinley, Jim Jeter and Regina Miller.

GUESTS – Salem Saloom, Tommy Thompson, Alton Hall, Cheryl Hall, Kathy McCrimmon, Doug Trantham, Steve Cauthen, Steve Guy, Roy McAuley, Chauncey Wood, Jimmy Looney, Dan Hopkins, Matt Carlisle, and Jeremy Harper.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – Chairman Ken Real called the meeting of the Alabama Forestry Commission to order at 10:00 a.m. on October 20, 2011 in the Commission's state office executive conference room, 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

ROLL CALL – Regina Miller called roll. All Commissioners except Jerry Smith were present. Miller announced that a quorum was present.

Don Heath made a motion to approve Jerry Smith's absence due to illness. Randy Gilmore seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

MINUTES OF THE JULY 21, 2011 MEETING – Commissioner Heath made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2011 meeting as written. Commissioner Johnny McReynolds seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Miller stated that the meeting had been properly advertised.

BUDGETS – Assistant State Forester, Patrick Glass, compared the Commission's operating budgets for FY11, FY12 and proposed FY13 as follows:

	FY11	FY12	FY13
Personnel	\$17,807,238.00	\$17,191,210.00	\$21,158,412.31
Operating	\$ 5,983,817.00	\$ 5,388,055.00	\$ 6,631,452.31
Capital	\$ 407,078.00	\$ 2,913,695.00	\$ 3,586,086.15
TOTAL	\$24,198,133.00	\$ 25,492,960.00	\$31,375,950.77
Full-Time Employees	252	260	320

CHOCOLOCCO STATE FOREST: CALHOUN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REQUEST

– Hank McKinley, NE Regional Forester, presented a request from the Calhoun County Soil & Water Conservation District (CCS&WCD) whereby the CCS&WCD will construct an Agricultural Meeting center, Livestock Arena, and parking lots on approximately eleven acres at Bains Gap located on Choccolocco State Forest.

Adequate office space for three Alabama Forestry Commission employees is to be provided with maintenance, upkeep, utility, and other expenses to be shared between the two entities.

The CCS&WCD also requests access to the surrounding 90+/-acres to implement educational and recreational practices and demonstrations.

Commissioner Gilmore made a motion to approve State Forester Linda Casey to proceed with a memorandum of agreement between the two entities. Commissioner Heath seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

LAND TRANSACTION UPDATE – Legal Counsel, Tom Conway, reported that the Commission is leasing the third well at Hauss Nursery to the City of Atmore for ten years. The city is paying all costs to maintain and secure the well. The Commission will have an unlimited supply and use of the well. He stated that the Quad Cities Volunteer Fire Department transaction has been executed.

BMP REPORT – Jim Jeter, BMP Coordinator, explained that some changes or modifications to the BMP program were implemented this year including a third-year implementation survey instead of an annual survey.

Thirty-two water quality complaints related to silviculture were investigated by Commission personnel. Sixteen were complaints requiring further action while sixteen were not valid and required no action.

FIRE UPDATE – Operations Division Director, Dan Jackson, reported that the number of fires in FY 2011 were 3,665 burning 69,764 acres with an average fire size of 19 acres. He added that the total number of fire call responses were 4,492 which included fires controlled before AFC arrival and false alarms.

The total fire suppression costs were \$2.8 million and includes man hours only and not equipment time.

There were 38 fires in tornado damaged areas burning 3,316 acres.

FOREST ACTION PLAN – Neil Letson, Assistant Operations Division Director and leader in the development of Alabama's Forest Action Plan, informed Commissioners that the Task Force, composed of seven state and federal natural resource agencies, has developed the FY 2012 Annual Work Plan. The document includes specific strategies that address three priority threats to Alabama's forest resource – urban growth and development, forest fragmentation and parcelization, and invasive species. The plan will be used as a guide for collaboration.

STATE FORESTERS REPORT – State Forester, Linda Casey, reported the following:

- USFS 2012 Competitive Grants – Grant requests are being developed for Multi-Spectral Assessment & Detection, Wildfire Analyst, and Forest Certification.
- Possible listing of threatened or endangered species in Alabama- USF&WS is now reviewing 374 animals and plant species to determine the potential to classify as threatened or endangered species. Approximately 1/3 of these species are in the state of Alabama alone. The Commission is working with USDA Forest Service and Southern Group of State Foresters Policy Analyst to provide comments on the proposed listing to USF&WS. Information has been shared with Alabama forestry Association, landowners, and other stakeholders. A letter has been sent to Rep. Frank Lucas, Chair, U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee making him aware of the issue.
- H-2B Wage Rule – The house congressional delegation has been contacted regarding HR3162. The bill would stop the Department of Labor from Implementing wage increases that range from a low of 26% to a high of 104%.
- Silvicultural Regulatory Consistency Act and Amicus Brief – Letters were sent to Alabama's Congressional Delegation requesting their support and co-sponsorship of S.1369 and H.R. 2541. The AFC successfully worked with the Governor and Attorney General's Office to obtain their support for the amicus brief.
- 2012 Farm Bill – A letter was sent to Alabama's Congressional Delegation asking for their support for specific Cooperative State and Private Programs of the USDA Forest Service.
- Impact of Reduction in Personnel Benefits – Employees must now pay more into their retirement funds, subsistence pay has been eliminated in retirement benefits, no salary increases in four years, twenty employees have been lost this year -10 to retirement.
- Status of Certification Programs – the agency is submitting multi-state USDA Forest Service competitive grants for landowner education on all available certification programs,
- Reviewing a proposal from International Paper for a Forest Stewardship Certification pilot project. Casey stated that she needed direction from the Commissioners and asked if they wanted the Commission to be involved in forest certification. Following discussion, Casey said that she would notify Commissioners of her discussion with representatives of International Paper prior to the January Commission meeting and ask their guidance.
- Forest Resource Marketing Strategy –Casey stated that she had met with Chris Isaacson to discuss development of a team to identify local, state/federal barriers to development and enhancement of forest product markets. The Southern Group of State Foresters and the Services, Utilization, and Marketing (SUM) Task Force has developed marketing information and is in the process of securing a marketing person to work with the southern states.
- Partnership with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – the Commission and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will be working cooperatively on fire mitigation of state lands and adjoining private landowners property.

WEBINAR - Patrick Glass reported that the agency is partnering with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to produce and distribute webinars for landowner education as well as conducting internal training through webinars.

BRANDING – Glass stated that firefighting agency pickups and transports now have FIRE and/or WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION decals to create more awareness that the agency is a firefighting agency and to more readily admit agency vehicles to a wildfire site.

REGIONAL FORESTRY & FIELD DAYS – Dan Jackson reported that the agency assisted and participated in the Alabama Natural Resource Council's three Regional Stewardship Field Events in Houston County, Winston County and Coosa County during October.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING – Commissioners scheduled the next meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 19, 2012 at the Commission's state office, 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama.

Chairman Real reminded Commissioner Don Heath that he and Commissioner Jerry Smith are to present the nominating committee report for 2012 officers at the January, 2012 meeting.

Chairman Real asked if there was any other business to come before the Commission.

Commissioner Heath made a motion that the Commission enter into an executive session for a discussion involving the general reputation and character of certain employees of the Commission. Commissioner Gilmore seconded the motion. Commissioners Johnny McReynolds, Melisa Love, Don Heath, Ken Real, Irvin Eatman, and Randy Gilmore voted in favor of entering into executive session, which began at 12:02 p.m.

The executive session ended at 1:07 p.m. Chairman Real stated that no vote was taken as a result of the executive session and the Commission meeting was adjourned.